Russian Federation and the United Kingdom have called upon Pakistan to fulfil its promises of abandoning terrorism and to put an end to cross-border terrorism, recognising this as an essential step for reduction in tensions between India and Pakistan.

Harassment of Indian immigrants in Italy

277. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether illegal Indian immigrants in Italy are being harassed by Indian Foreign Office for issue of new passports;

(b) whether it is a fact that some of the lower staff are seeking bribes to help them; and

(c) the action proposed to assist the Indians in ensuring that their FIRs on loss of passports are filed by the Italian Police and help them in getting new passports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) No.

(b) No.

(c) Our missions in Italy have dispensed with the system of registering of police reports for lost passports and are issuing authority letters to the applicants on the same day. If passport particulars are confirmed from the Passport Issuing Offices, duplicate passports are issued on the same day.

Issuance of passports to Abu Salem

278. DR. ALLADI P. RAJKUMAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the places in India from where Abu Salem, the notorious underworld don, and his accomplice Monica Bedi got passports;

(b) whether these passports were issued under fictitious names;

(c) whether enquiries have been held in this regard;

(d) the number of persons involved in issuing passports; and

(e) the action taken or proposed to be taken against them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) Abu Salem has been issued passports from Lucknow, Bhopal, Hyderabad and Monica Bedi has been issued passports from Bhopal, Hyderabad and Mumbai.

(b) Yes. Except for the passport issued to Monica Bedi from Regional Passport Office, Mumbai on June 24, 1999 in her real name, all other passports have been obtained by them under fictitious names.

(c) Yes.

(d) and (e) All the passports mentioned above have been revoked by the concerned passport offices. A case filed by Special Task Force (CBI) in connection with the issue of passports to Abu Salem from Regional Passport Office, Lucknow is pending trial in the court. Departmental proceedings were started against two officials of Regional Passport Office Lucknow regarding the issue of passport to Abu Salem from Regional Passport Office Lucknow. A case has been registered by CBI against Abu Salem, his wife and Monica Bedi in regard to the issue of passports to them from Regional Passport Office Hyderabad. Monica Bedi has been charged sheeted in regard to the issue of passport to her from Regional Passport Office Bhopal and a warrant of arrest issued against her by a court. Investigations by the police of the respective states are also underway in regard to the issue of passports to Abu Salem and Monica Bedi from Hyderabad and Bhopal. Three persons were arrested by the police in Andhra Pradesh in connection with the issuing of passport to Abu Salem from Hyderabad.

India's comments on recent missile test by Pakistan

279. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether, instead of making ironical statements to the media about the recent missile testing by Pakistan, Government have thought correct to strongly bring the issue to the international community and the US, that Pakistan has been constantly trying to destabilize South East Asia by its missile test programme;